

# The Purpose of Karma Yoga in the Seeker's Journey

Sadhguru looks at why action may be necessary at a certain stage of a sadhaka's growth, and how the choice we have is to rule or serve in action.

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Jan 8, 2016



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*Q: Sadhguru, how do I go beyond action or karma yoga? Personally, I have no urge to do anything. I feel like drifting towards a state of non-doing.*



**Sadhguru:** When a person has made ultimate reality the goal in his life, action becomes meaningless. Once action is meaningless, any kind of self-image is of no great significance; but right now, in the state you are in, there is still a need for action. You have not yet reached a point where you have transcended action. You are unable to be without action. So, perform the kind of action you think is best right now and do what is needed for the situation.

A man who does not know action – real, intense action – can never move into inaction. If you try, inaction will just become lethargy. People who are always resting in their life must be experts about rest, but that is not the truth. People who have never been on fire will not know the coolness of water. People who have just lived their life in a half-hearted manner, sedately, can never know the other way. So, intense activity, at least for a while can be useful for your energies to reach a boiling point and get moving. Then, to transform them into something else is very easy. That's the whole purpose of karma or action. A sadhaka chooses action for this reason. We are going to perform action anyway. But we have the choice to perform Adolf Hitler's or Mahatma Gandhi's type of action. That's all there is to it. Anyway we have to perform action, so let us do it whole-heartedly and choose the form of action.

## **Rule or Serve – What's Your Choice?**

Do you want to rule the world or do you want to serve the world? Ultimately, that's the choice. Normally, everyone wants to rule the world. It is just that because most people are half-hearted, they are only able to rule their family! But what they really want is to rule the world. They don't have the capacity or the intensity to do it. Otherwise, they would be a potential Hitler.

So, the choice is to rule or to serve. Choose whichever kind of action you think is most harmonious and closest to divinity and realization. Every moment, do it with tremendous intensity, without giving it a single moment's break. Then, a day will come when action is not needed anymore. If you really want to know this "non-doing" business, first you must discover what doing is. You have not done that yet. In every waking moment and even in my sleep, unceasingly I pursue this work of offering myself, physically and mentally. It is only out of that, that all of this has happened in my life. It has become so powerful simply because it does not mean anything to me, but I am at it twenty-four hours. This has a different kind of power. That is the whole meaning of sacrifice. It is only out of that, that something else happens – both inside and outside – which can never be put into words.

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This is how every powerful individual in this world is created. This is the science of creating a truly powerful being. This is not power to rule. This is not a power that can be taken away at any moment. No one can take it away, because wherever you are put, that is what you do. If you want to rule, you have to sit on the seat. If someone pulls you off the seat, you will be miserable. This is not like that. Wherever you are put – heaven or hell – you just do your work. This releases you from the fruit of action. Once you are released from the fruit of action, the action will happen by itself. You don't have to stop working to be released from action. It will simply dissolve, melt and disappear. Once the expectation of the fruit of action is completely removed from your life, the action occurs by itself. You don't have to do anything about it.

## **“No Work, No Food”**

In one of the Zen monasteries, there was an old Master who was over eighty years old. Every day, he worked his heart out in the gardens. In Zen monasteries, gardening is one of the most important parts of the sadhana. Day in and day out, people spend time in the garden. This Master had been doing this for years. Now, he was over eighty and had become weak, but he did not stop. The whole day, he worked in the garden. Many times his disciples tried to dissuade him, “Stop working, we are all here, we will do it.” But he just went on doing what he could. His capacity to work physically might have come down, but the intensity had not.

If you run away and sit on the mountain, you will not become free. It has to be worked out. This is the way to work it out.

So, one day the disciples took away his tools and hid them somewhere, as he would work only with these tools. That day, he did not eat. The next day, there were no tools again, so he did not eat. The third day also, no tools; he did not eat. By then they got scared, “Oh! Because we hid the tools, he is angry. He is not eating.” Once again, they replaced the tools where they were usually placed. On the fourth day, he worked and ate. Then in the evening, he gave his teaching: “No work, no food,” and he went back and died. That was the last day. The four days of fasting were too much for him; but the last day he worked, he ate, then he left his body, and he just gave this teaching: “No work, no food.” For this kind of a man, action is like this. Hell, heaven or earth, wherever he is put, he will be the same. Once you are like this, you are released from the external situation.

By just closing your eyes, you will not become released. The moment you open them, everything will come back and catch up with you. If you run away and sit on the mountain, you will not become free. It has to be worked out. This is the way to work it out.

***Editor’s Note:*** Excerpted from *Mystic’s Musings*. Not for the faint-hearted, this book deftly guides us with answers about reality that transcend our fears, angers, hopes, and struggles. Sadhguru keeps us teetering on the edge of logic and captivates us with his answers to questions relating to life, death, rebirth, suffering, karma, and the journey of the Self. Download the [sample pdf](#) or [purchase the ebook](#).